

Moulders of Manly.

Percy Walter Gledhill. Number 11 in the series.

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MAN08827 First committee of Manly Museum & Art Gallery, P.W. Gledhill 4 from right MAGAM

To the student there is no more fascinating study than the historical records of nations, cities, towns and hamlets. Their origin, customs, growth and progress, the founding of their institutions are, as Carlyle has aptly stated, “the experience of innumerable biographies”, and those biographies are, in the words of Helps, “the chart and compass for national endeavour.”

Closely linked with the dawn of Australian colonisation, the story of manly from the landing of Captain Arthur Phillip in 1788, to the present time, should be of interest to every resident, to the older generation in general, and to the younger generation in particular. Here the pioneers, men and women in days gone by, played their part and played it well, they laid the foundations well and truly, and the developments that have since taken place in the edifice erected may largely be attributed to their sterling work and worth.

Their records are a chart and compass for the younger generation, and if read, marked learned and inwardly digested, should prove of great educative and inspirational value. This is a course of study that might profitably be followed in schools not only in Manly, but in every centre throughout the State. It certainly would be a great stimulus to national endeavour.

It is pleasing to note that the moving finger has been writing in Manly and has been worthily tabulating records for the edification of future generations. The historian is Percy Walter Gledhill, who was born at Sydney on 10th February, 1890. He was the son of old residents of Manly, and a grandson of Charles Eastes, first chemist of Manly. A resident of the municipality since 1913, Mr Gledhill has closely followed its growth and progress. He was one of the founders of the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society in 1924, and as its secretary from 1924 to 1940, and its president since the latter year he has been enabled to compile highly interesting information which will shortly be embodied in a comprehensive history of Manly and Pittwater, together with a history of the Camperdown Cemetery.

A lecturer of no mean note, Mr Gledhill has entertained the public on many occasions with interesting stories, illustrated by slides. He was also responsible for the erection of cairns and monuments to mark historic spots in Manly. Included in a lengthening list are monuments at West Esplanade, where, incidentally, functions were held for many years on Anniversary Day, also at Boyle Street, Collins' Flat, The Spit, and many parts of Warringah Shire and the Hawkesbury. In honour of his historical work the Commonwealth Government approved of a site on Barrenjoey Headland being named "Gledhill Lookout", and at McCarr's Creek, Pittwater, stands a monument indicating "Upper and Lower Gledhill Falls," named by the Government of NSW.

Following his researches, Mr Gledhill is hon. secretary of Bar Island on the Hawkesbury River, a councillor of the Royal Historical Society, a councillor of the Society of Australian Genealogists, and a fellow of the Manly Historical Society. He has been the author of the histories of St Matthew's, Manly; Barrenjoey Lighthouse; Bar Island; St Luke's Church, Brookvale; Hawkesbury River; Darling River; the Outback life of Australia; the first Sunday School in Australia; and the following historic Anglican churches: Windsor, Richmond, Penrith, St Mary's, Mount Victoria, and other sacred edifices, including St John's, Pittwater.

An ardent and devoted Churchman, Mr Gledhill has an unique record of service. He has been Manly's representative to the Diocesan Synod since 1925, hon. secretary and churchwarden of St Luke's, Brookvale, from 1913 to 1937; superintendent of St Luke's Sunday School from 1933 to 1937. Through his efforts St Luke's and St Andrew's, Oxford Falls were erected free of debt. Among other ecclesiastical posts held were: Warden of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, 1937-39; member for years of Moore Theological College; churchwarden, St Philip's, Sydney, 1940-1945; trustee of the historic Camperdown Cemetery since 1924, and chairman since 1926; official historian to the Diocese of Bathurst; lay reader to the Parish of Manly, 1913-1921; and to the Diocese of Sydney since 1921.

It will thus be seen that Mr Gledhill's life has been a very active one. In addition to his historical work, which will prove of inestimable value in years to come, he has followed in the steps of the Master, Whom he has faithfully served. He, too, has gone about "doing good". By his ennobling influence and good works he has helped to elevate this community in particular and other centres in general. *The Manly Daily* has great pleasure in according this gentleman a place in the municipal galleries and trusts that he will be spared for many years to carry on his good work.

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